April 17, 2008

TO: Eric Nordlof, Attorney at Law

FROM: Holly Platz, Legal Affairs Division

SUBJECT: Tom McNeely v. Western Washington University
                    Allocation Review No. ALLO-07-101

The Director's review of Western Washington University's (WWU) allocation determination of Tom McNeely's position has been completed. The review was based on written documentation.

Background

On May 7, 2007, Mr. McNeely requested reallocation of his Information Technology Specialist 3 (ITS3) position to the Information Technology Specialist 4 (ITS4) classification. WWU conducted a review of his position and by report dated October 4, 2007, determined that the position was properly allocated. On October 29, 2007, Mr. McNeely filed a request for a Director's review of WWU's decision.

Summary of Mr. McNeely's Perspective

Mr. McNeely provided extensive arguments in the documents he submitted for this review. In brief summary, Mr. McNeely argues that his assigned duties; the level of autonomy, discretion, initiative and judgment he exercises; the complexity of his work; and the breadth of impact of his work best fit the ITS4 classification. Mr. McNeely contends that his work has institution wide impact, is non-routine and integrates new technology, and affects how the library's mission is accomplished. Mr. McNeely explains that he is responsible for managing seven servers, five of which provide service to all of WWU. Mr. McNeely asserts that he manages server operating systems, security, network services, and some applications for the library. Mr. McNeely contends that his work is complex and primarily project oriented. Mr. McNeely agrees that his work is specific to library operations but contends that his work goes beyond generic technical responsibility and includes acting as a business analyst by understanding library functions and by helping and influencing the library to leverage technology to better accomplish its mission.

Summary of WWU's reasoning

WWU acknowledges that Mr. McNeely develops new procedures for the use of technology in the library, that he plans, coordinates and executes projects, and creates software to automate or

streamline work in the library. However, WWU asserts that Mr. McNeely's work impacts library operations, not the division or university as a whole as intended by the ITS4 classification. WWU acknowledges that Mr. McNeely has decision-making authority but asserts that his supervisor has the budget authority to approve projects and set priorities that may impact library operations. WWU argues that while Mr. McNeely may set security standards for the library, the Vice Provost of Information and Telecommunications Services approves standards for university-wide systems. WWU acknowledges that Mr. McNeely works on servers in the library but asserts that at the ITS4 level, incumbents work on multi-server systems at an institutional and/or divisional level operating under a common set of policies, procedures, goals, and functions set by the organization, not by the departments. WWU contends that Mr. McNeely works under the general direction of the Head of Library Systems and performs his duties independently; exercises independent judgment in interpreting policies and procedures; establishes work priorities, work flow and methods; and conceives, formulates and implements project plans. WWU asserts that Mr. McNeely's responsibilities include providing consultation, problem resolution, troubleshooting and needs assessments for the library; researching and making recommendations for software development and technical streamlining for the library; and providing security for the web server and other servers used in the library. WWU acknowledges that Mr. McNeely's work is varied and complex, but argues that his position does not have the scope or level of responsibility encompassed at the ITS4 level.

Director's Determination

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file, the written arguments and exhibits provided by both parties, and the additional information I requested. Based on my review of the documents, the available classifications, and my analysis of Mr. McNeely's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude that his position in properly allocated.

Rationale for Determination

In describing his work, Mr. McNeely provided the percentage breakdown shown below. The bulleted items describe the duties he performs within each category that he believes meet the ITS4 level.

55% Develop and implement information technology solutions to aid the accomplishment of the Library's mission and operations which includes:
- Developing new procedures for the use of technology in Library operations;
- Planning, coordinating and executing IT projects including complex projects involving multiple phases and dependencies;
- Creating software programs to automate or streamline his work and the work of other Library departments and employees, manipulate data, and solve various problems;
- Solving technical problems and/or devising workarounds;
- Identifying and evaluating software, techniques and procedures which might be suitable for supporting the Library's operations;
- Researching and studying relevant technologies, methods and issues and introducing new technologies and procedures to the Library Systems department.

20% Technical management of services and network services which includes:
- Installing, configuring, managing, and troubleshooting server operating systems, virtualization software, and network services for seven server machines including several that perform multiple functions involving interoperation between multiple servers;
- Managing security for servers and network services;
- Troubleshooting network problems such as address conflicts and connectivity problems.

10% Documentation and training which includes:
- Creating and maintaining extensive and detailed documentation for all library servers and network services;
- Writing documents analyzing, explaining and/or summarizing various technical topics; writing documents for some of the software programs he creates;
- Training others as needed, and giving occasional "tips and tricks" presentations at Library staff meetings.

10% Consulting, collaboration, and back-up for the Library Systems department which includes:
- Consulting and collaborating with colleagues in the department in matters involving programming, difficult troubleshooting, regular expressions, SQL queries, working in the Unix/Linux environment or discussions of planning or procedures.

5% Miscellaneous which includes:
- Serving on the library Technical Committee;
- Sharing information and acting as liaison with technical staff of other university departments;
- Reading and occasionally contributing to relevant emails, lists and forums.

The distinguishing characteristics for the ITS4 classification state:

Performs analysis, system design, acquisition, installation, maintenance, programming, project management, quality assurance, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and/or consulting tasks for complex computing system, application, data access/retrieval, multi-functional databases or database management systems, telecommunication, project or operational problems.

As a senior-level specialist in an assigned area of responsibility and/or as a team or project leader, applies advanced technical knowledge and considerable discretion to evaluate and resolve complex tasks such as planning and directing large-scale projects; conducting capacity planning; designing multiple-server systems; directing or facilitating the installation of complex systems, hardware, software, application interfaces, or applications; developing and implementing quality assurance testing and performance monitoring; planning, administering, and coordinating organization-wide information technology training; acting as a liaison on the development of applications; representing institution-wide computing and/or telecommunication standards and philosophy at meetings; or developing security policies and standards.

> Incumbents understand the customer's business from the perspective of a senior business person and are conversant in the customer's business language. Projects assigned to this level impact geographical groupings of offices/facilities, and/or regional, divisional, or multiple business units with multiple functions. The majority of tasks performed have wide-area impact, integrate new technology, and/or affect how the mission is accomplished.

Complex technical tasks are those that require substantive application of knowledge and experience of a variety of technical procedures, processes, materials and/or equipment to accomplish tasks independently and to decide which rules, processes, materials or equipment to use in order to effectively accomplish work activities. A senior-level specialist utilizes advanced skills above those typically used when independently performing work assignments and applies advanced skills to devise methods to meet new, unique and complex work requirements and problems.

In Pogue and Goshorn v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case Nos. R-ALLO-07-017 and R-ALLO-07-018 (2008), the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) found that the appellants were properly allocated to the ITS4 classification, in part, because they worked on projects that impacted multiple business units with multiple functions and that had wide-area impact, integrated new technology, and affected how the mission of the organization was accomplished.

Unlike Pogue and Goshorn, Mr. McNeely's work does not impact multiple business units with multiple functions that have wide-area impact, integrate new technology, and affect how the mission of the organization is accomplished. Rather, the majority of his responsibilities are limited in scope to the library system. Mr. McNeely's work impacts the departments within the library such as Cataloging, Circulations, Interlibrary Loans and other departments. While Mr. McNeely's work affects the services the library provides to its staff and users, his work does not impact the functions of departments outside the library or impact how the mission of the university is accomplished to the extent envisioned by the ITS4 classification.

This is consistent with the decision of the Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) in Vance v. Dept. of Social and Health Services, PAB Case No. ALLO-04-0008 (2004). In Vance, the appellant worked at Western State Hospital and requested that his position be reallocated to the level equivalent to ITS4. The PAB determined Western State Hospital was part of one of the agency's eight administrative units. The PAB concluded that the appellant's position was properly allocated to the ITS3 level (formerly Information Technology Systems Specialist 3) because he performed duties in direct support of the computer network at Western State Hospital, a single business unit.

At Western Washington University, multiple administrative units report to the President of the University. These include External Affairs; Business and Financial Affairs; Student Affairs and Academic Support Services; University Advancement; and Academic Affairs. The library is one of approximately sixteen departments within Academic Affairs. Analogous to Vance, Mr. McNeely's department is part of one of the University's administrative units. Consistent with the PAB's decision in Vance, Mr. McNeely's position does not have the breadth of responsibility

envisioned at the ITS4 level. Rather he provides direct support to a single business unit, the library.

The PAB also addressed this issue in <u>van Pelt v. Western Washington University</u>, PAB Case No. ALLO-03-0011 (2004). In <u>van Pelt</u>, the PAB determined that the appellant provided support to the College of Arts and Sciences; however, the majority of his responsibilities did not have division-wide or a multiple-function area impact. The PAB further determined that while the appellant worked with several departments within the College of Arts and Sciences, a majority of the tasks he performed did not have division or institutional area impact. The PAB concluded that the appellant was properly allocated to the ITS3 level (formerly Information Technology Systems Specialist III). The College of Arts and Sciences is within the Academic Affairs as is the library. Here, Mr. McNeely provides support to the library but the majority of his responsibilities do not have division-wide or a multiple-function area impact.

A portion of the tasks Mr. McNeely performs are described in the examples of work for the ITS4 classification. However, examples of work statements are not allocating criteria. Rather they provide guidance on the level of work typically found in the various classes within the series. When allocating positions, the guidance provided in the (DOP) Classification and Pay Administrative Guide establishes that the following standards are primary considerations in allocating positions:

        a) Category concept (if one exists).
        b) Definition or basic function of the class.
        c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class.
        d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.

(See <u>Jurgensen v. DOC</u>, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-016 (2008).

Mr. McNeely's position fits within the Category Concept for Information Technology Specialists. However, his position does not have the breadth, scope or level of impact anticipated by the distinguishing characteristics for the ITS4 level. Therefore, allocation of his position to this level is not appropriate.

The distinguishing characteristics for the ITS3 classification state:

> In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.

> Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs assessments; leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.

> The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

The scope of Mr. McNeely's position and the preponderance of his duties and responsibilities fit within the distinguishing characteristics for the ITS3 level. His work is in support of the library's information technology systems, he works independently performing the majority of the duties listed, he uses innovative approaches, and the majority of his work impacts a single business function, the library.

In addition, the majority of Mr. McNeely's duties are consistent with the examples of work typically performed by positions at the ITS3. For example, Mr. McNeely:

- Conducts needs assessments, requirements analysis and evaluates products for applications, computing, and/or telecommunication technologies that may be applied to the library's requirements.
- Documents work flow, assists clients in defining and prioritizing requirements, analyzes customers' needs, provides information to clients on the capabilities and limitations of available systems.
- Plans, sets and maintains project schedules, ensures standards are met (quality assurance), develops and implements communications strategy and provides quality assurance for projects.
- Creates installation plans; independently installs and configures hardware/software and orients users on functionality and manages software licenses.
- Serves as system administrator. Identifies moderate operational problems that impact library functions.
- Analyzes and corrects network malfunctions.
- Uses advanced hardware and software diagnostic techniques to identify and either resolve or refer problems to other staff for analysis.
- Monitors and enhances operating environments to ensure optimal performance.
- Assesses training needs, determines training approaches and develops course materials. Instructs users and computer support staff. Consults on desktop productivity tools/software.
- Implements security policies and standards.
- Identifies documentation needs. Creates documentation for systems and users.
- Supports, maintains and enhances existing applications that impact the Library.
- Occasionally leads staff.

Overall, the scope of Mr. McNeely's duties and responsibilities, the breadth of impact of his position, the preponderance of his assignments, his use of innovation, and his level of independence, are best described by the ITS3 classification. His position is properly allocated.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

> An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Enclosure: List of Exhibits